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STATE FOR AF/E AND A/S FRAZER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [SOCI](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PRESIDENT YUSUF: I AM A DEMOCRAT, NOT A
DICTATOR

Classified By: Somalia Counselor Bob Patterson. Reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. On November 20, Special Envoy Yates met with an intractable President Yusuf, who made it clear that he was unable to work with Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein and was more interested in assigning blame than moving forward on a peace process. Yusuf termed the Prime Minister's determination to confirm a cabinet without him an "illegal" use of power that was bad for Somalia. In contrast, Yusuf said, he was abiding by the country's laws and its Charter in order to avoid becoming the "dictator" that the PM had become.

¶2. (C) Yusuf accused Ethiopia and other IGAD countries of without his knowledge substituting pages in the October 29 final communique that he had signed. Yusuf presented us with a sheaf of documents to support the legalistic arguments around his opposition to the PM's choices for a new cabinet. Yusuf told us he had not been informed of the November 22 - 25 meeting in Djibouti and said he did not know anything about the composition of the TFG delegation to that meeting which, he said, anyway represented just the PM's Hawiye clan, not "all Somalis." While Yusuf professed to support the emergence of a government of national unity, he presented no roadmap for achieving one. Yusuf divulged little about his recent trips to Tripoli and Khartoum. End Summary.

Accusing PM of Illegal Activities

¶3. (C) Special Envoy Yates met with Transitional Federal Government (TFG) President Abdullahi Yusuf on November 20, shortly after Yusuf arrived in Nairobi from recent stops in Tripoli and Khartoum. While friendly and in an almost jovial mood, it was clear that Yusuf was prepared to fight Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein to the very end. He insisted that he was unable to work with the PM who "abusing" his powers. Yusuf recognized that the fact that the President and Prime Minister could not work together was disastrous for Somalia but he maintained there was nothing he could do. He claimed that PM Hussein refused to listen to him or to Parliament, and that his actions violated the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC). Yusuf lamented, "I do not know whom he reports to."

¶4. (C) When S/E Yates made it clear that the USG fully supported the Djibouti Process led by SRSO Ould-Abdallah, Yusuf professed not to know about the November 22 - 25 meetings of the High Level and Joint Security Committees. Yusuf told the Special Envoy that if he were invited, he

would come.

15. (C) S/E Yates highlighted our consistent support of the TFG and stressed its mandate to deliver services to the people of Somalia and engineer a democratic political transition. The Special Envoy reminded Yusuf that it was Yusuf who had appointed Prime Minister Hussein. To get anything done, they must work together, S/E Yates said. Yates also reminded the TFG President that last year, he was making the same complaints about then-Prime Minister Gedi that he now made about Yusuf. Yusuf responded, "Who created this unfortunate situation? I have never tried to divide the TFG) I have done nothing wrong."

16. (C) Yusuf accused the PM of leading a reconciliation process that was focused on one clan only. Yusuf agreed that reconciliation was necessary, and that ideally a government of national unity would emerge from the process. However, he cautioned that this could not be accomplished through the Djibouti Process if the TFG delegation remained unrepresentative. Yusuf accused the PM of presenting a new delegation for Djibouti that he had not approved and that comprised only the PM's supporters. Yusuf placed the blame for the failures of the TFG squarely on the shoulders of the Prime Minister but stated, "If I am wrong, tell me. If I am spoiling things, I will stop."

Pointing Fingers

17. (C) President Yusuf then began a series of legalistic arguments. He argued that a Supreme Court ruling concluded

that the new cabinet appointed by the Prime Minister in early August, after the resignation of ten ministers, was "illegal according to the Charter." (Note: Somalia does not have a functioning Supreme Court.) And, Yusuf said, "I am a democrat. I respect our laws, our Charter. All of us should abide by our laws. If we do something outside the law, we become dictators."

18. (C) Yusuf told S/E Yates that the next day, he would go to Mogadishu. (Note: The Prime Minister arrived in Mogadishu on November 20 with several MPs and other supporters he took with him from Nairobi). Yusuf said, "If you tell me the TFG is useless, I will go. We want the TFG to survive, but we must find out what is wrong." By Yusuf's own analysis, the faults of the TFG lie with the Prime Minister, Parliament, and IGAD.

19. (C) Yusuf said that the Parliament's confirmation of the Prime Minister's cabinet in September had been illegal. In recognizing the current cabinet, IGAD and the international community were supporting an illegal arrangement. Yusuf strongly criticized IGAD for encouraging all of Somalia's Transitional Federal Institutions to come to Nairobi for the October 28 - 29 IGAD Summit. IGAD decisions, he said, were made by Ethiopia alone. Finally, Yusuf accused IGAD of showing him one version of the final IGAD communique and then presenting him with another for signature.

110. (C) While Yusuf focused on the minutiae of the "illegal" decisions others had made, S/E Yates pressed him on the need for compromise and advancing the Djibouti Process. S/E Yates argued that if the negotiation team in Djibouti was indeed representative of all Somalis, it could succeed. Yusuf implied that the Prime Minister had loaded the delegation with members of his fellow Hawiye clan. (Note: Yusuf's advisor, Abdirashid Said, who repeatedly interjected himself into the conversation with S/E Yates, offered detailed footnotes to the legalistic arguments Yusuf was using to discredit the Prime Minister. Said was more direct in a later conversation with Poloff, telling us that PM Hussein, Sheikh Sharif, ARS/Asmara's Hassan Dahir Aweys, former Merka warlord Indra-Adde, and the al-Shabaab were all Hawiye. The Hawiye, he said, were dominating the Djibouti Process and preventing "everyone else" from being included. Said accused the PM of negotiating with the likes of Indra-Adde; thereby preventing

any real progress.)

Need for Compromise

¶11. (C) S/E Yates emphatically stated that the most important thing for the TFG was compromise. Yusuf replied, "I am willing to compromise, but the Prime Minister is not) people are pushing him not to compromise." Yusuf claimed that he would be happy with the establishment of a government of national unity as soon as possible. Although the Special Envoy urged Yusuf to share his vision for a unity government and the future of the TFG, Yusuf did not. Instead, he detailed how the Prime Minister had violated the Addis agreement by choosing not to follow the criteria established for the selection of new ministers.

¶12. (C) Yusuf declined to provide significant details about his recent visits to Tripoli and Khartoum. Yusuf stated only that he was invited by Libyan President Qaddafi who shared his commitment to reconciliation and to a solution to Somalia's problems. Yusuf said that Qaddafi stood ready to solve the crisis within the TFG. Yusuf said he had met with the Tanzanian President and AU Chairman Kikwete while in Tripoli. He divulged nothing of his November 19 meeting with Sudanese President Bashir in Khartoum.

¶13. (C) As the discussion ended, President Yusuf implored S/E Yates to read the documents he had presented of the history of the "illegal" actions that were allegedly plaguing the TFG. Yusuf agreed that the upcoming meeting in Djibouti could be important, but insisted that the TFG must have "legitimate" representation. He said that the United States and the UN should decide who is representing the TFG. S/E Yates cautioned that it was not the role of the USG to determine who the TFG included in its delegation. The TFG must act to implement the October 26 cessation of armed

conflict agreement and negotiate the establishment of a unity government. The November 20 meeting with S/E Yates strongly suggested that Yusuf was not prepared to address any of these vital next steps.

RANNEBERGER